# When Renters Rise, Cities Thrive

Nashville #RenterWeekofAction

The United States is increasingly a renter nation, especially since the foreclosure crisis. Today, 107 million people live in renter households, and renters are contributing ever more to the economic, social, and cultural vitality of neighborhoods and cities. They could be contributing even more if it were not for skyrocketing rents and stagnant wages. When the rent is too high, little is left over for basics like food, transportation, health care, and education. Millions of families are increasingly at risk of eviction and homelessness.

Renters are critical to Nashville's present and future...

- Renter
- Owner

45%
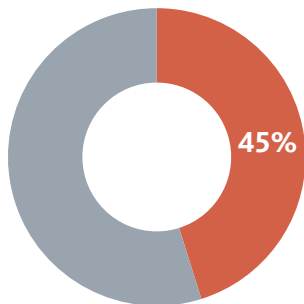
Nashville's renter population is 276,900 strong, an **increase of 32% since 2000**.

...but they are burdened by rising rents and low wages.

49%
pay too much for housing*

- Renters already contribute **$3.7 billion** each year to the Nashville economy.**
- If rents were more affordable, renters and the city would be much better off.

If all Nashville renters paid only what they could afford on housing...

...they would have an extra $299 million to spend in the community each year, or

$5,500
per household***

This would cover the basics for a two-person household, like:

- 1.2 times an entire food budget,
- 1.3 times the cost of child care,
- 65% of transportation costs, or
- 59% of tuition at a Tennessee public university.

Everyone would be better off, and racial inequities would shrink.

Increase in yearly disposable income by race:

Race	Increase
White	7%
Black	11%
Latino	10%
Asian or Pacific Islander	6%
Mixed/other	9%
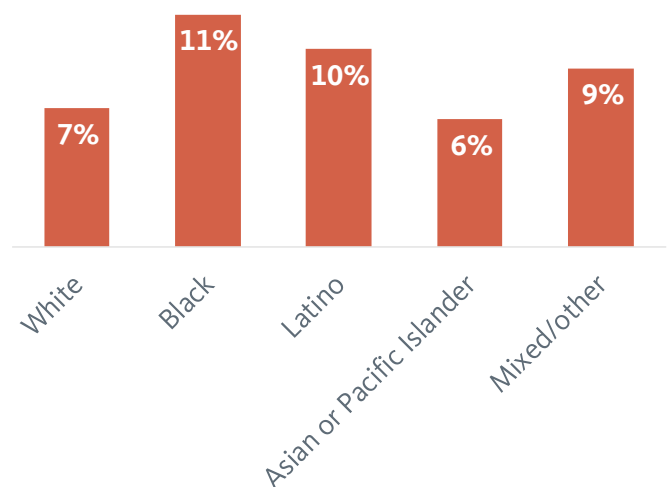
As incomes drop, cost burdens rise. Since 2000, renters have seen:

20%
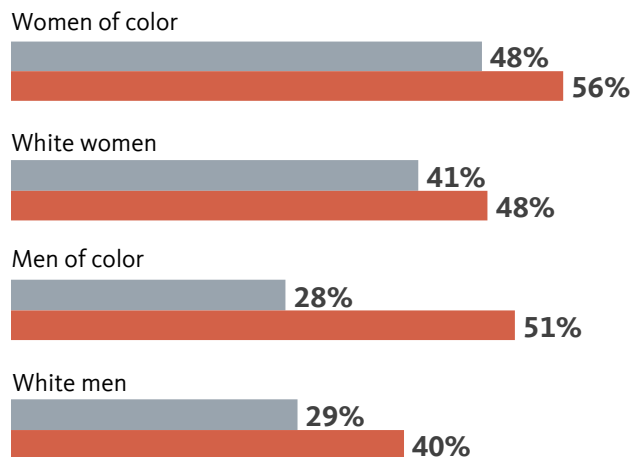decline in median income****

56%
increase in cost-burdened households

Women of color continue to face the steepest burdens.

Share of renters paying more than 30% of income on housing by race and gender

■ 2000
■ 2015

Women of color
48%
56%

White women
41%
48%

Men of color
28%
51%

White men
29%
40%

Nashville thrives when its renters thrive. #RenterWeekofAction calls for:

1) **Renter rights** including just cause eviction, stronger code enforcement, rent control, and anti-displacement protections—with real enforcement infrastructure.

2) **Tenants' right to organize** and bargain collectively.

3) **Community control over land and housing** through land trusts, cooperatives, and non-market solutions for affordable homes.

4) **An end to Wall Street giveaways** because home is a human right, not a commodity for the wealthy.

5) **Full funding for HUD** so that every income-eligible family in the nation has a home.

Data analysis from the National Equity Atlas, a partnership between PolicyLink and the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE). **Sources:** 2015 5-Year American Community Survey and 2000 Decennial Census microdata from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, the MIT Living Wage Calculator, and the College Board.

Notes: Unless otherwise noted, "renters" refers to renter-occupied households. All data by race and gender are determined by the race and gender of the household head and are only reported if the sample size is sufficient. All racial/ethnic groups are non-Latino (except for Latinos) and women/men of color include all persons who do not identify as non-Hispanic White. All dollar values in 2015 dollars. "Disposable income" is defined as

household income minus housing costs (rent and utilities). *We use the common standard of spending no more than 30 percent of income on housing costs to measure affordability at the household level, also called housing burden. **Renter contributions to the local economy are defined as income minus housing costs (disposable income). ***Potential increase in disposable income per rent-burdened household. Data on living expenses are at the county level from the MIT Living Wage Calculator for a household comprising one adult and one child. Data on education expenses at public four-year colleges are from the College Board and are at the state level for 2015. ****Real, inflation-adjusted decrease in median renter household income.

For more information:
www.homesforall.org/renterweekofaction

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RENTER POWER
#RENTERWEEKofACTION